292

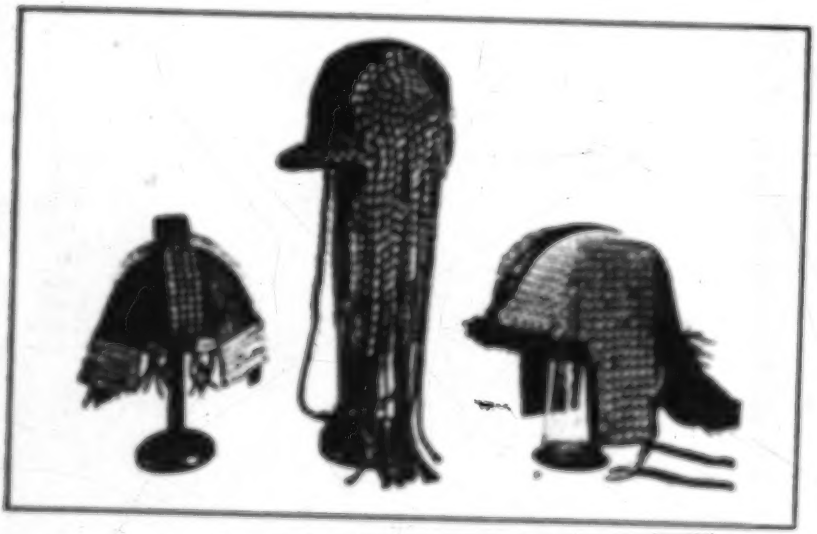

Fig. 119. Helmet Caps.

Of 25 different forms, which are given individual names, about half are worn by both sexes indiscriminately; the rest are worn only by men or only by women. Among the Fang the men's ornaments are more frequently the same as those of the women than is the case among the Ntum, and for this reason they are more frequently the butt of ridicule. 302 301

Helmet crests and ornamental caps are worn constantly; only as a sign of mourning are both taken off -- the former is sometimes also taken off before a hunting expedition. /178/ 292 765

To make his ornamental caps (*edʒ̄ban*, *eʒ̄e'*), the Ntum takes a hide from a long-tailed monkey, dwarf antelope, young goat, or sheep. The hide is cleaned of its fur, turned inside out, and drawn over the arch of a plantain rootstock that has been cut to a semi-spherical shape. It is tied with a string at the base, and along the edge it is fastened by pegs to the ground. Stretched in this way, the hide must be dried in the sun and later over the fire. 294 281

Furthermore, blackened bast strips of the Triumfetta are needed. These are colored in the following manner: the bark of certain 294 386 824

When a man dies and one of his relatives marries his wives, there is no additional payment of dowry. When a man loses his wife, the dowry is repaid fully, or in part, by the relatives of the deceased wife if she has left no children. If there are children, the widower makes no claim to the dowry.

The widow cuts her hair. After the death of the husband, the wife is made to confess the names of her lovers in order to make them give payments which will finance the celebrations at the end of mourning. She must weep for one whole day and one whole night; she may do nothing without the permission of her husband's heir; and for a month she stays dirty, dressed in an old loincloth. At the end of this time there are celebrations of the end of mourning which last several days. The widow sits for a whole night in the village square, and the husband's relatives throw her water and pimento. The following morning she jumps four times over a fire of dry banana leaves. While she is jumping, men hit her for the anguish which she has caused her husband to endure. After that she receives a new loincloth from her family and then, before beginning the dances, if she has not accepted remarriage to her husband's heir, she chooses a new husband from among the assembled men of the dead man's family.

Neither homosexuality nor bestiality have ever been recorded, to our knowledge, among the Fan.

Prostitution does not exist.

Impotence (eyel), if it is congenital, is attributed to the mother's having accidentally caused milk to flow onto the penis of her son while nursing him. If it occurs later, it is said to be from the abuse of coitus and it is believed that there is no more sperm in the impotent person.

Family Group. The family (nda ebur) consists of the man, his wives, his children, and his brothers. It usually includes several homes and constitutes a village in itself. The authority belongs to the father, and it is he who commands because of his being the most respected. He has absolute power, but also incurs certain duties, the most important of which is to find money or goods as dowry for the women whom his sons wish to marry. These dowries are usually obtained through payments made by the girls' husbands. The most complete mutual aid is obligatory among all members of the family, in all circumstances. When the parents have become too old to continue exercising their authority, they live with the family of their oldest son

there are placed in it the arms or some everyday objects of the deceased. Then everyone goes back to the village, the women crying. The close relatives of the deceased go into mourning, which is much stricter for a woman than for a man; we have already seen what comprises the mourning of a widow. As for the widower, after having stayed for two or three days in a state of prostration, often simulated, he continues to look after his work as usual, remaining meanwhile under the obligation to stay dirty until the celebrations at the end of mourning.

The autopsy of the corpse to find the evur is done at the edge of the grave, after the women have been sent away. The package containing [93] the corpse is undone and the practitioner operates with a large knife made especially for this purpose. He has previously painted his face half black, half red so that the deceased will not recognize him and cannot come from his abode in the village of Nzame to avenge himself for the mutilation he is undergoing. When the operation is finished, the corpse is sewed up, re-wrapped, and placed normally in the grave.

There is no cemetery, and the dead are buried a short distance from the village, almost behind the huts. Sometimes when a person is thought to have died from having been eaten by the bivur, in order that the grave may not be violated for the purpose of removing a piece of the corpse, it is buried in the very hut of the head of the family.

The life of the dead in the village of Nzame is identical with that which they had at home; they do the same work, have the same entertainments, marry, procreate, always stay young, and also have the power to do whatever they wish; it is enough for them to express a wish for it to be granted.

The dead sometimes leave their abode to return to the earth, perhaps in the form of phantoms with long hair to frighten the living, meeting a phantom being fatal, or perhaps in the shape of animals in order to avenge themselves. Some may change themselves into an elephant and ravage the fields of their enemies; others change into a panther and kill all the livestock and poultry and sometimes even the inhabitants of the village where they were unhappy in life. When they wish to be beneficent, they appear in the dreams of their relatives and friends and give them wise advice.

422 brought produce of the locality, the system of directions very probably being ascribed to sexual categories, the northeast area, male and the southwest area, female. It would be advisable to know more about the ritual use of different tools and implements in order to throw more light on the subject. We know that the saber, fa, is essentially male, that the hunting bell tied to a dog's neck, angôk, is essentially female, that the drum-telephone, nkul, is androgynous (though women are not allowed to use it); the rifle, ngal, is probably epicene, and the same is true for a few other objects, but we know almost nothing about the effect of this sexual differentiation upon property and its conveyance.

In any case, since the introduction of a money economy, personal property /propriété mobilière/ has become almost entirely individual. Personal property /meubles/ that remains collective is primarily so by appropriation, like the equipment of associations, the profits of their subscriptions, sometimes objects bought in common by members of a family because of their cost or function—like the sewing machines obtained from Spanish Guinea after the last war, for instance.

422 Personal property still involves some restrictions for women and
513 young men, although they are less and less accepted. Respectful sons and submissive wives still allow their fathers and husbands to use the objects acquired by the earnings of their labor, but when they rebel the trend of the courts is increasingly in their favor. However, the obligatory aid arising from family ties still holds good, and to refuse to "lend" something to a monyaŋ is likely to be frowned on, which is a serious matter. Thus there survives a kind of right of collective family use working against individual /ownership of/ personal property.

g. Inheritance, Guardianship

422 These come about from death or disappearance. A paternal curse
578 did not entail loss of civil rights, but the possessions left behind by an accursed son who quit his village were confiscated and divided among his brothers.

428 The disposal of possessions left by a dead man, called lik from
● 745 lik = to leave, took place at the end of the period of mourning, meyep, perhaps /77/ a mbu, six months after death. This waiting period tends to become shorter and in towns usually lasts a month.

304 of the neck for the ndô; a (secret) design on the sacrum for the ngtî; three horizontal marks on the nape for the ndôngô; a line of "vaccination marks" on the inner surface of the arms, forearms, and thighs, and along the carotid arteries, for the serpent /associations/, etc.

309 Men wore their hair braided, or else they shaved the temples and parietal bones, leaving a sort of comb on the top of the skull, suggesting a gorilla's crest. There were special ways of dressing the hair appropriate for the different initiations. The moustache was worn only by the benya bôô; the beard, a goatee, by a few aged men, often diviners. In our day men usually wear their hair short and merely combed; a central part, in the Lower Nigerian fashion, was very common around 1948 among factory hands, while former recruits went in for a crew cut with a frill beard /barbe en collier/. Many students wear a little goatee, and this style is now growing among the rest of the younger generation. Since up to now wearing a beard was a sign of mourning, a political implication has sometimes been [DS] attributed to this fashion--but mourning beards are not trimmed. /88/

Women have many ways of doing their hair, in plaits, checker [DS] board, "horns," etc. As a sign of mourning their heads are shaved, and they are not allowed to comb the hair that grows out before the end of mourning. The growth of beard or moustache that often [HS] follows menopause is considered a sign of sorcery. Stylish women 269 pluck their armpits, and a few also remove their pubic hair, for reasons perhaps of elegance and hygiene, perhaps of ritual (is there a relationship between the name of the important female rite mevungu and mevul, meaning "female pubic hair?"). Padouk powder, baa, is still used in the way that henna is for both magical and aesthetic reasons, but European make-up, mainly lipstick, has taken its place among young fashionable women.

55 Bodily cleanliness is much in favor: men and women often bathe several times a day with plenty of soap. But it is common to see them put back on their well-scrubbed bodies perfectly filthy clothes, no doubt because bodily cleanliness is a much older practice than that of wearing clothes made of cloth.

c. Psychological Characteristics

181 Like the majority of known peoples, the Pahouin have a very flattering opinion of themselves, and the curious thing is that this

764 commun/ were buried by their co-wives and the women of their affinal family. Boogô and bikelelé were buried at home with no other ceremonial than the mother's mourning.

768 767 When signs of sorcery were found on a corpse, the ngengañ or mvimvi'i turned to divination to find the presumed culprit, who was subjected to an ordeal of bitter herbs. As a general thing, wives had 615 to submit regularly to the pimento or ant ordeals to make them confess not only the part they might have had in the husband's death but also their adulteries. When no one was found responsible for the death of a mie individual (nonsorcerer), it was decided that he had been the victim of a breaking of taboo, nsem, sometimes unwittingly. Whatever the cause of death, sorcery or nsem or repercussion from 763 an act of sorcery, purification always occurred, generally by a sacrifice at the end of the mourning period (meyep). /103/

765 The duration of mourning was, and still is, a mbu /six months/, but it is now less rigorous. Formerly the wives of the dead man were secluded, naked, for a month in his hut, the first wife lying on his bed; their heads and all their body hair were shaved, and they were painted white with ash and forbidden to wash or do their hair until the end of mourning. The dead man's brothers and sons shaved their heads and let their beards grow without trimming or combing; their foreheads were painted white and they wore only old clothes. They had to observe a series of prohibitions concerning certain ways of hunting, the eating of certain kinds of game (perhaps the dead man's personal totem?), all journeys, the circumcision of the dead man's sons, the use of a bed, etc. The end of mourning was marked by a sacrifice and often by a melan ceremony in order to enter into communication with the dead man.

The strictest mourning was observed for the death of an esa, a man of the father's age grade, less for a monyañ, and hardly any for a mongô. With regard to women, a man observed solemn mourning only for his mother and first wife, and this meant mourning within the family, while a man's death involved the whole village. However, an epidemic was followed by heavy mourning, and when the one presumed responsible was identified, it was not enough that he 766 pay avutan, compensation, he was burned or drowned (his immediate 759 family was constrained to pay the avutan), and then a general 762 purification was undertaken.

177 Obviously this has now changed, but perhaps not so much as one
764 would imagine: every year the courts are aware of several ordeals after a death, of mutilations of corpses which are really autopsies, of sums of money extorted which are customary compensation payments imposed on the "person responsible" for a death. And we may assume that in this connection three-quarters of the cases never reach the European courts. Funeral rites have, however, been lightened and colored by Christian influence, even when the deceased had remained to the end attached to the old beliefs: his wives or children usually call in a nkat foé (news-announcer • catechist) to say the prayers for the dead and to sing psalms or hymns. The old-fashioned cylindrical bark litter has been replaced by a European plank coffin, gradually even for women and children. The graves of the well-to-do have masonry walls and are covered with a concrete slab bearing name, date of death, and a pious text, or even with a small flower bed framed with bricks or bottle necks, with a grave stone or cross at the head. The dead man's hut is no longer destroyed, especially if made of "solid" material, nor are his personal effects broken. Often the body is washed and dressed in European clothes instead of being anointed with baa; the white shroud remains. In Christian families women take part in wakes for men and attend their burials; men attend the burials of women but rarely take part in their wakes. In
[795] /104/ many villages the different /Christian/ sects have separate cemeteries.

765 Mourning is less rigorous and is often expressed by the European
177 black arm band and tie worn by men. In the villages widows are still rather ill-treated (cf. above, pp. 128-129), but their sequestration has been reduced to a week, and they are allowed to wash after a month or two. Most of the prohibitions of the mourning period have fallen out of use, and the end of mourning is marked by a family gathering which has more about it of a certain kind of French provincial New Year's Eve party than of the old purificatory rites.

761 Death in the traditional concept is not so much the cessation of life as the dissociation of the personality. Enyiñ, life, comes from the verb nyiñ meaning "to survive" rather than "to be alive"; /thus life represents/ a kind of dynamism opposed to the static to, tabe • to be, exist, remain, etc.

826 The body, nyul or nyôl, is perishable and corruptible; it supports
774 the other elements of the personality, above all the nsisim or nsisiñ,

755 goes to the sick man's hut. A variety of remedies are used,
779 among them always a dance in honor of the totem. After the dance and the driving out of the evil spirits [576] that torment the sick man, a sacrifice is made, often of a she-goat, a sheep, or at least a fowl. The sick man always has to eat some of this sacrifice, and the practitioner mixes into it fragments of the patient's family totem, as he does into any potions administered. If the sick man recovers, he will have to offer a black hen on the évora bíéri before he leaves his hut. The hen will then be burnt according to the sacred rituals.

764 If the man dies, his eldest son closes his eyes and
779 straightens the arms and legs before they become stiff, after which the corpse may not be touched, under grave penalties. The lamentations begin, but in an undertone; the dead man's wives gather around him, tear at their arms and legs, and with the blood that flows sprinkle the corpse. He is then covered with his fetishes and at his side is the mébup on which his family totem is hung. After the first lamentations are over, the commotion quiets down and only the dead man's wives continue to weep.

In the morning the eldest son and heir offers a sacrifice to the deceased's family totem so that it may continue to favor the survivors. He puts some of the victim's blood into the mouth of the corpse and also takes some in his own mouth. He then completes the sacrifice according to the customary rites.

Before the burial another sacrifice will be made in order to determine the location of the grave and to make sure that the dead man is satisfied. The corpse is made to partake of this sacrifice too.

At the appropriate time, the dead man is placed in the grave dug for him; his family totem lies beside him, and, if he is a tribal chief, the clan or tribal totem is also placed at his side. This is left to him for a few moments, then the heir removes it, so as to "take possession."

765 The same ceremonies are observed when the skull is re-
779 moved, 30 days after death.

765 This skull cannot, however, be put into the évora bièri
779 right away, it must first be "acknowledged." The rite is analogous to that of the chief's initiation, which has already been described. The skull [577] is carried into the forest, placed upon a kind of altar, and a victim is immolated in its honor. It is sprinkled with lustral water, then with blood. The chief's heir then takes the skull and makes it first "acknowledge" the ancestral skulls, then successively the family and clan totems, and ends with the tribal totem.

768 Thirty days after death the funeral dances or fanki also
779 take place, and then the division of the deceased's property, particularly his wives. His hut usually stays closed throughout this time, with the door barred and the roof covered with thorns so that the deceased's spirit cannot re-enter the house, which would mean making further sacrifices.

The mortuary rites are very complicated and very solemn among the Fan, especially for an important chief. I have here referred only to totemic rites. The totem will live again later in the person of one of the descendants, usually the grandson,
[557] who, in many cases, will have both the name and the totem of his grandfather.

[p. 578-663 not translated]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

in mourning, a necklace is made from bleached grass plaited; it is worn by both sexes. A very favourite fetish charm to suspend from a necklace is a leopard tooth. I have frequently seen the two tusks of a wild boar or "Wart hog" worn around the neck as an ornament and have succeeded in bringing specimens worn mostly by the women. Imported thick brass wire wound around the forearm from wrist to elbow is a very favourite armlet; it is kept highly polished. Brass wire is often wound so tightly around the biceps as to seriously interfere with circulation. Broad pieces of beaten brass are worn on the arms, and ivory bracelets are much valued. Sometimes six or more rings of ivory are cut from a tusk, and all worn on one arm. Finger and thumb rings are mostly worn by the women; they are made of brass, copper, or iron, and are usually very thick and heavy.

Rings are no indication of rank or marriage. It is not uncommon to see a woman with three heavy brass rings on one thumb, and eight or ten similar rings on the fingers. Narrow girdles of leopard, goat or deer skins are worn across the chest to support the native fighting knife and bunch of fetish charms. I have been visited by a bushman wearing no less than twenty-three charms.

Legs and feet.—Leglets and anklets of brass are much worn and sought after by women. Brass leg rings imported by traders are in great demand. There does not appear to be any special time set for commencing to wear anklets; more infants are frequently decorated with them. Some of the leglets are very heavy, and many women wear ten or more on one leg. These rings often fit very tightly and impede circulation, or chafe and cause nasty indolent ulcers. The ankles and feet often swell and become very painful as a result of insufficient blood supply. Toe-rings are of iron and brass largely worn, and fit so tightly that the ring is often deeply imbedded in the flesh. Usually only one ring is worn on a single toe.

Painting and Tattooing.

Painting.—The method of painting the body by smearing on redwood powder mixed with palm oil, so largely practised by the Bulu, is followed in the same manner but to a much less extent by the Fang. Soft portions of the redwood tree are pulverised and mixed with oil into a thick paste, and the preparation smeared over the entire body. Occasionally a red band is painted across the forehead. When in mourning, dust, mud, or white clay is frequently rubbed over the entire body. Much more frequent is the practice of painting arrow heads, bands, or dots. The pigment used is a dark blue colour, obtained I am told from a tree fungus. The *Ngi* or witch doctor, when at work, in addition to his other paraphernalia smears his body with white chalk. Except in the case of the *Ngi*, the only object in decorating the body by painting is to appear *ebony* (beautiful), and with the Bulu when asked the reason for smearing the body with red paint, they usually reply it is *ebony* (handsome). Imported pigments are not used for body decoration.

Tattooing.—The custom of tattooing is much in vogue. I have not been able

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

372 log from the last town where the caravan rested. This man kept the piece of wood
484 burning by gently swinging it backward and forward, while marching along the path with his load. On one occasion I timed a native, and when we reached the next stopping place, after a three hours' tramp in the rain, the brand was still burning brightly, and it had been frequently passed from one end of the caravan to the other so that all who desired could light their pipes from it.

372 The Fang use fire in the ceremony *of going out of mourning*. I witnessed this
● 765 ceremony once at Forkaliding. The widows of an old headman had put in the regular time of mourning and were now to be released. There were seven widows in all, three of middle age, and four young girls. A small fire of leaves had been lighted in the centre of the street, and on each side of the fire stood several young men armed with switches. The widows wore a very slender loin cloth. At a given signal the widows rushed toward the fire and bounded through it, the young men switching them as they passed, but the switches were not used severely. Immediately after the switching, each widow seated herself on the ground holding a bunch of burning leaves under her feet, while a young man shaved their heads
[78] with a sharp trade knife. On inquiry regarding this ceremony, I obtained the following information: Passing the fire *three* times after mourning (evidently considered a means of purification). Switching reminds the widows of their duty to the man who inherits them as his wives. Burning has two meanings: firstly, the pain caused is endured as a last act of mourning for the departed; second, it signifies that henceforth the widows walk a new path (*enter upon a new life*).

372 Fire has a place in Fang religion or belief. The sun is considered the *nsie*
(father) of all heat, and the original maker of all fire, whether by friction, matches,
621 powder, or lightning. When a severe thunderstorm is at its height, the natives say of the lightning, "that the sun has *bitt* his face and is shooting fire, because he is angry." The native word for sun is *fe*. Although the palaver house fire is kept burning, still, no special effort is made to keep it alight; should it go out, any person present is at liberty to rekindle it from newly produced fire.

VII.—Customs.

671 The Fang have no system of law, *or* judge or tribunal for punishment of crime. Theft, murder, offences against the person are all settled according to native customs.

629 Example: A Fang of the Esisie clan steals goods or a woman from a Fang of
631 the Nge clan. The Nge who has been wronged does not go to the offender for settlement, he goes to another near town and shoots the first goat he sees in the street, *or if very angry, he may shoot a woman.* The owner of the goat *or woman* demands of the Nge his reason for doing so. The Nge replies, "*An Esisie*" (*giving* the man's name) "has wronged me; I put the palaver (his offence) on you." The third party then goes to the Esisie and says, "*An Nge*" (*giving* the man's name) "has shot my goat (*or woman*) *because* you have made trouble with him; he has put *your palaver* (*trouble*) on me. You must *pay me!*" The original offender is

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

places where they are going to build these respectively), large bush rat, porcupine, squirrels, die in the traps; deer, gazelle, antelope, large deer and pigs die in the pitfalls. The animals which die in the *elem* are these. This is the *elem*. 224 539

XVII.—*Burials.*

Death is never considered as due to natural causes. Disease followed by death is due to *evus* (witch). It is not considered unlucky to attend a dying person. The body is usually left in the house until burial. Embalming is not practised. Mourners smear white clay on their bodies and wear necklaces of pineapple fibre for one moon (month). A coffin is not used and the body is buried in the sitting posture. After burial the grave is levelled off as in the case almost throughout West Africa; the only difference between the burial of a headman and a common man is in the amount of visitors and mourning, and the quarrelling over his goods. Widow of a dead headman remain in mourning from one to three moons (months). The witch doctor, *ngengen*, usually performs a post mortem to find the witch. I attended a post mortem on an old woman. The witch doctor ripped open the abdomen with an old rusty knife, grasped and cut away the uterus and holding it up to the crowd declared "Six witches!" The crowd passed the word "six witches," and spoke the praises of the witch doctor. Relations usually continue to mourn or wail for one moon while inside the house or at work in the gardens. The most common wail is *Ó nsa Ó! Ó tat Ó!* (Oh mother! Oh father!). 764 [760] 765 [769]

XVIII.—*Ekôn.*

This is a dance. It is not *bieng* (medicine) nor is it *ebi*. It is, however, practised by men only. The women must not see it. The latter stay within doors, and only hear the words which the men speak outside. The men speak with artificial voices, so that the women cannot recognise who it is that is speaking. (*Fam a kôn ne kôl nie ebôt.*) To make the artificial sounds they use a membrane (*ism*) which encloses the young of the spider (*ndombôn*). This they spread over a hole (about ¾ inch diameter) near the small end of an elephant tusk (*ebeng nsok*) from 1 to 2½ feet in length, attaching it with beeswax (*obô*) or a liquid which is obtained from a plantain stalk fresh cut. This juice is called *ekiel*. It possesses an adhesive property. The man blows on the large end of the ivory. A curious sound then issues through the membrane so that the man's voice cannot be recognised. This instrument is called *ebeng ekôn*. The act of playing on the instrument is called *e kôn ekôn* (*e kôn*, talk). The performer sings songs; the words are distinctly heard. He sings and all others sing responsively (*e yo bi'bengane Fube*). 535 534

Many songs are used in *ekôn*. Here are three specimens of them:— 533 539

(1) *Bimen Fube kôn?* *Bun bengo esy mot.* Who speaks any more? (i.e., Be silent, let no one speak.) Others are listening with pleasure (i.e., to the performance).